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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 BIB-01 /059 W
----------081737Z 127656 /50
P R 081742Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1597
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, FR, US
SUBJECT: FRENCH REACTION TO US POSITION ON COMMUNISTS
IN WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS

REFS: (A) PARIS 9781; (B) PARIS 10164

SUMMARY. APRIL 6 STATEMENT BY HODDING CARTER HAS DRAWN FAVORABLE REACTION FROM ALMOST ALL SECTORS OF PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION COMMENTARY. RPR (GAULLIST) LEADER JACQUES CHIRAC PRONOUNCED HIMSELF SATISFIED WITH THE US POSITION AS DID COMMUNIST PARTY FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERT JEAN KANAPA. NEITHER THE ELYSEE NOR THE SOCIALIST PARTY HAS COMMENTED THUS FAR. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON COMMUNISTS IN WESTERN EURO-
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PEAN GOVERNMENTS HAS BEEN EXTENSIVELY COVERED IN FRENCH PRESS AS WELL AS TELEVISION AND RADIO. THE DECLARATION HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS PRAGMATIC, REALISTIC AND SKILLFUL AND HAS NOT SUFFERED FROM THE INACCURACIES AND DISTORTIONS WHICH MARKED VIRTUALLY ALL COVERAGE OF THE KANAPA/EMBOFFS MEETING (ALTHOUGH THERE IS A TENDENCY TO ATTRIBUTE THE REMARKS DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER

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RATHER THAN DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN CARTER).

2. IN GENERAL, PRESS COVERAGE HAS BEEN MORE THOUGHTFUL IN REACTING TO LATEST STATEMENT THAN IN TREATMENT OF PREVIOUS KANAPA/JEAN-PIERRE COT/GISCARD REVELATIONS. ALTHOUGH HEADLINES HAVE FREQUENTLY SEIZED ON "DOMINATION VERSUS PARTICIPATION" THEME TO PRODUCE SENSATIONALIZED COPY, AND AS "CARTER WARNS EUROPEANS" (LE MONDE) OR "CARTER WARNING" (FIGARO), COMMENTARY HAS BEEN MUCH MORE RESTRAINED AND BALANCED. LE MONDE FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL APRIL 8 SAYS THAT US DECLARATION SHOWS CARTER'S HEART IS STILL WITH THE CURRENT GOF, BUT THAT HIS ADVERSION TO COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IS FORMULATED IN TERMS "CLEARLY MORE MODERATE" THAN THOSE OF THE KISSINGER/HAIG ERA (A COMMON THEME THROUGHOUT THE PRESS). EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT US POSITION FOLLOWS LOGICALLY FROM THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S ACCENT ON DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS, TO THE EXTENT THAT SUCH FREEDOMS WOULD BE FOILED BY PARTIES NOT BASED ON THE SAME FUNDAMENTAL DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. BUT BENEATH SUCH IDEALISTIC MOTIVATIONS, SAYS LE MONDE, THE CONSIDERATIONS OF SECU-RITY AND STABILITY ARE NO LESS IMPORTANT THAN THEY WERE TO MR. KISSINGER.

3. GAULLIST LEADER AND MAYOR OF PARIS CHIRAC CALLED THE US DECLARATION A STATEMENT OF THE OBVIOUS AND SAID HE WAS NOT "SHOCKED" BY AN AFFIRMATION THAT COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION WOULD POSE PROBLEMS FOR EUROPEAN GOVERN-MENTS (SEPTEL). HE CONTINUED TO SAY THAT THE STATEMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS NOT INTERFERENCE IN FRENCH POLITICS AND THAT HE HIMSELF WAS NOT "IRRITATED" BY EMBASSY/PCF CONTACTS. CHIRAC ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH CONTACTS MIGHT BE HANDLED WITH MORE DISCRETION AND BETTER TIMING.

4.PCF POLITBUREAU MEMBER KANAPA PRONOUNCED HIMSELF PLEASED THAT THE US RECOGNIZES COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION AS A PROBLEM TO BE DECIDED BY THE PEOPLE OF EACH COUN-TRY. HE ADDED THAT US FEARS OF COMMUNIST "DOMINATION" DID NOT APPLY TO FRANCE SINCE A LEFT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A COALITION OF SOCIALISTS, COMMUNISTS AND OTHERS.

5.THE ELYSEE "NO COMMENT" IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE A SIGN OF SATISFACTION. IN FACT, THE ELYSEE COULD HARDLY TAKE ISSUE WITH A US STATEMENT OF NON-INTERFER-ENCE, PARTICULARLY WHEN IT INCLUDES A POSITION ON DEMO-CRATIC PRINCIPLES WHICH CAN BE TAKEN AS A FAVORABLE NOD TO THE GOF. THE JUDICIOUS SILENCE OF OTHER LEFT COALITION PARTIES, PS AND MRG, CAN ALSO BE TAKEN AS A

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SIGN OF SATISFACTION.

6. WHILE CHIRAC HIMSELF TOOK AN UNEMOTIONAL LINE ON

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EMBOFFS' CONTACTS WITH KANAPA, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT NOT ALL OF HIS TROOPS FEEL THE SAME WAY. IN THE INFORMAL SETTING OF THE RPR'S PARLIAMENTARIAN MEETING LAST WEEK AT LES BAUX, EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE OFTEN IMPORTUNED BY DEPUTIES VARIOUSLY FOR HAVING ANY CONTACTS AT ALL WITH A RENEGADE PARTY, FOR ALLOWING NEWS OF SUCH CONTACTS TO REACH THE PUBLIC AND FOR SIMPLY HELPING THE LEFT. NO AMOUNT OF EXPLANATION SEEMED TO ALLAY THEIR FEARS. SUBSEQUENTLY, WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED THE SAME SORT OF REACTION FROM OTHER MAJORITY POLITICIANS AND PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN SAFELY BE CONSIDERED TO BE IN THE GISCARDIAN CAMP. WHAT IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE CONTENT OF THEIR CRITICISM IS THE STATE OF MIND IT REVEALS. MAJORITY RANK-AND-FILE ARE STILL SUF-

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FERING FROM THE SHOCK OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND ARE MOST PESSIMISTIC FOR MAJORITY PROSPECTS NEXT YEAR. THEY MAY AT TIMES LOOK FOR AN EXTERIOR SCAPEGOAT AND FIND A SHORT TIME SOLACE IN PINNING THE BLAME FOR THEIR SITUATION ON OTHERS. THE EXERCISE, HOWEVER, MAY AWAKEN THEM TO THE FACT THAT ONLY THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO FACE UP TO THE CHALLENGE WHICH CONFRONTS THEM FROM THE LEFT.
GAMMON

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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